

THE SANTA CLAUS LIE

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This is one of the church crimes of modern times; it is the substitution of a lie for the truth; this is the devil's work. "Because there is no truth in him, when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44. The devil succeeds in getting people to believe a lie when he gets parents and Sunday-school teachers to substitute Santa Claus for Jesus Christ. This old lie is universal and its grip is hard to break. If your mind has never taken the subject under consideration your lips may curl at the assertions made. All I ask is an examination of the subject.

It takes the mind from Christ to a mere creature of the imagination. Jesus was born on Dec. 25, over nineteen hundred years ago, but the children are taught that Santa Claus comes on Dec. 25. Their minds are taken from a truth to a lie.

Good gifts come from God. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17. The children are taught that their gifts come from Santa Claus, and they believe it. You not only lie yourself to the innocent little things, but you turn round and make out the Bible a lie. What a shame!

It is contrary to the Bible. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty." II Pet. 1:16. When substituting a thing of the imagination for the power and coming of Christ you are teaching a cunningly devised fable, and many of us have been eye witnesses of this sinful nonsense.

Sunday-schools should be in better business than spreading a lie like this, in place of teaching the children about Jesus. He is not even mentioned. Days and sometimes weeks are spent drilling for this thing. Jesus is lost sight of, and the little children actually robbed of correct teaching because superintendents and teachers only have time for Santa Claus. Alas! What a hindrance to Christ's cause is an unsanctified Sunday-school.

Publishers spread this lie. I was in a religious publishing house before Christmas and saw a dozen different publications on Santa Claus. One was headed the coming of Santa Claus. Think of it! Teaching that stuff on the birthday of Christ, the false for the true. A poison pill, sugar coated is poison still, it may taste nice and slip thro the throat easy, but it works death. Santa Claus may be fixed in nice stories and poems but it is false all the same and works death.

Fathers and mothers spread this lie. On the first Sunday in December they will go to the communion table and by that act will say they show forth the Lord's death till he come, then spend the balance of the month teaching their children the coming of Santa Claus. If parents would stop this business of lying to their children the schools and publishers would soon go out of the business of publishing lies to aid the devil in promoting the cause of Christ.

Look at the effect of such teaching on the mind of the child. You create doubt and foster skepticism. Children as a general thing are not fools. After drinking in your teaching then finding out you have taught them falsely, they reason along other lines from the same premises. Said a little chap, after finding out the truth, "Mamma, I don't want to hear any more Bible stories; there isn't any Santa Claus, and there isn't a single stork in the county, and just as likely as not there never was any Jesus." Such is the logical outcome of such false teaching.

The time comes when you have to unteach what you taught. Your past untruths become burdensome; the young folks are getting old enough to paddle their own canoe and you tell them there is no such person as Santa Claus.

Said a writer: "As I grew older one of my sisters told me who Santa Claus was. At first I felt angry because she tried to make me believe that my parents would tell an untruth. When, finally, I had to yield, I felt so disappointed that I did not want to live any longer in a world of deception. It was a long time before I became reconciled to the situation.

Another writer says: "When I became a father we taught our first born the same delusion. One day she returned from school excited, stating that she had got into a dispute with some of the scholars who claimed that there was no Santa Claus. She appealed to me to prove her position, and about this time I began to realize the importance of telling the truth to a tender offspring, who I knew had abiding confidence in me. Consequently I told her it was all false; the poor, innocent child was so badly shocked that she cried about the matter, and said she did not think that her papa and mamma would tell her such a big story. Our family consists of six children now, and Santa Claus has ceased sneaking down thro the chimney at the dead hour of night. Instead of that, their Christmas presents are given directly to them, and at the same time they are made to understand that they come from affectionate parents, and that they are expected to be loving and obedient children in return."

It would be well if other parents would follow the example of these. Let Christ

be taught, and the gifts presented and exchanged be in his name and let the children be taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and to this end let all followers of Christ take the advice of Paul: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." II Cor. 10:5.

Our Young People

SYSTEMATIC AND PROPORTIONATE GIVING

Mal. 3:7-12.

Topic Dec. 4

Such topics as this one ought to be studied oftener. Very few have proper conceptions of their duty in giving. We have been taught that it is our duty to give, but we have not been taught how or how much to give. Conscience is prone to become drilled in such matters and the great mass of Christians have come to look upon giving not as a vital part of worship but as a means merely of paying the necessary expenses of the church.

Each year we are getting more system into our church work and among other things we are hearing much about systematic giving. This is good but it is not enough. The topic contains the other word which is more important, i. e., *proportionate* giving. If Christians gave anything like a proper proportion of their income to the Lord's work the gospel could run with quadrupled speed to the ends of the earth.

Let us in this study get a firm grasp of the Bible teaching on systematic and on proportionate giving, and having gotten it, let us hold to it, practice it, teach it and keep on agitating it until we raise the standard of our giving to its proper place.

SYSTEMATIC GIVING

I Cor. 16:2; I Cor. 14:40

Children need definite rules while older people can be governed by principles. In the childhood of the race God gave specific directions about giving both as to manner and amount. The New Testament teaching raises the standard of giving but leaves the application to the individual.

PROPORTIONATE GIVING

The proportion prescribed in the Mosaic dispensation was one-tenth besides ceremonial offerings which swelled the offerings to almost two fifths. I am convinced that the obligation of the tithe rests upon the same basis as the Sabbath, i. e., the temporal and spiritual needs of man. Only a few references can be noted here and the reader is referred to the tract, "The Gospel of Giving," (published by the Brethren Publication Board,) for a fuller discussion.

1. The tithe was observed before Moses by Abraham. Gen. 14:20; Heb. 7:1-10, and by Jacob. Gen. 28:20-22.
2. It is first mentioned as a custom already existing. Lev. 27:30.
3. It is indirectly commanded by Christ. Luke 11:42.
4. It will be observed in the converted and restored kingdom of Israel. Jer. 33:13; Ezek. 20:37. (Note. The tithe was counted by passing the flocks under the rods, each tenth being touched.)
5. It was observed and enjoined by the early Christians.
6. Blessing follows the observance of the tithe and disaster the nonobservance of it. Mal. 3:8-10. The payment of the tithe was a recognition of God's ownership of the whole. Christ emphasized this teaching in the figure of a steward. Luke 19:11-27. Now a steward may simply reserve a living for himself. I Tim. 5:8; Luke 10:7; the rest is all to be used as the owner directs. Matt. 25:27. This then is the proportion for Christians, the tithe as a recog-